

Serving the Lord the only true Thankfulness.

18.

A
S E R M O N

ON
DEUTERONOMY ix. 6.

PREACHED at

W R L R E

THURSDAY the 5th of MAY 1763

By JOHN EYRE M. A.

CURATE of the same. *K*

“ O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands: serve the Lord
“ with gladness, and come before his presence with a
“ song.—O go your way into his gates with thank-
“ giving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful
“ unto him, and speak good of his name.” Pf. c. i.
“ and 3.

S A R U M:

Printed by E. EASTON Bookseller in the *Market-Place*;
And Sold by M. WITHERS at the *Seven Stars* between the
Temple-Gates in *Fleet-Street*, *London*.

M. DCC. LXIII.

[Price Six-Pence.]

Serving the Lord the only true Thankfulness.

SE R M O N



DEUTERONOMY IX. 6.

PREACHED BY

W. A. R. M.

THURSDAY the 14th of MAY 1763

BY J. O. H. M. E. R. M. A.

CURATE of the Church

“ O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands: testify the Lord
 “ with gladness, and come before his presence with a
 “ song.—O go your way into his gates with thank-
 “ giving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful
 “ unto him, and speak good of his name.” Ps. c.

S. A. R. M.

Printed by J. W. Widdowes in the Strand.
 And sold by M. Widdowes at the Swan in the Strand.
 London.

M. DCC. LXXIII.

[Price sixpence]



DEUT. ix. 6.

*Understand therefore, That the Lord thy God
giveth thee not this good Land to possess for
thy Righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked
People.*

TH E prophet Moses begins the chapter, from whence I have taken the words of my text, with this address to Israel after the flesh;
 “ Hear, O Israel, thou art to pass over Jordan this day,
 “ to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than
 “ thyself, cities great, and fenced up to heaven, a people
 “ great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom
 “ thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, who
 “ can stand before the children of Anak!” And that Israel might not be terrified or hurried into a despair of victory from what they had heard and knew of the nations, that he told them they were going over Jordan to possess, the prophet in the next verse exhorts them to rest assured, that the Lord their God, who had
 B wrought

wrought so many wonders for their fathers and themselves in Egypt, and in their passage through the wilderness, would fight and conquer for them. “ And
 “ understand (says he, v. 3. which rendering is here and
 “ in the text, preferable to *understand therefore*) or be ye
 “ sure (as the original word is rendered, Psal. c. v. 2.)”
 “ This day, That the Lord thy God is he, which goeth
 “ over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy
 “ them, and he shall bring them down before thy
 “ face: so shall thou drive them out and destroy them
 “ quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee.” And
 in order to prevent their being afterwards, when the
 Lord should have drove out these nations from before
 them, and planted them in; to prevent their being *then*
 puffed up on account of the Lord’s thus dealing with
 them, and thereupon thinking themselves (as men in
 such circumstances are extremely apt to do) *very* good,
 and the true and obedient servants of the Lord their
 God, the prophet thus proceeds in his address to them,
 herein assigning *quite* different reasons for the Lord’s
 acting thus, to wit, the wickedness of the nations
 themselves, and the Lord’s oath unto their fathers:
 and moreover, in the words of my text, he still more
 plainly and expressly assures them, that it could not be
 for their righteousness, because they were a *stiff-necked,*
rebellious people, as he proves by sundry particulars, *too*
 long here to recite, in the remaining part of the chap-
 ter; the prophet proceeds thus: “ Speak not thou in
 “ thine heart after that the Lord thy God hath cast
 “ them

“ them out from before thee, saying, for my righte-
 “ ousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this
 “ land: but for the wickedness of these nations the
 “ Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not
 “ for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine
 “ heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the
 “ wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth
 “ drive them out from before thee, and that he may
 “ perform the word, which the Lord sware unto thy
 “ fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And under-
 “ stand that the Lord thy God giveth thee *not* this
 “ good land to possess it for thy righteousness, for
 “ thou art a stiff-necked people.” Such then is the
 address or fact, of which my text is a part. And it is
 a fact of such a nature, as will *abundantly* furnish us
 with matter for our *spiritual* improvement, very suit-
 able for this day’s solemnity—this day of *public* thank-
 giving to Almighty God and his Christ, for restoring
 Peace to this our land. It will furnish us with mat-
 ter for our *spiritual* improvement, because all scripture,
 the old testament as well as the new, does this. This
 is undeniably evident (and what ought to be well
 attended to by us, as *too* many now-a-days are apt very
strangely and *wrongfully* to think and say that they have
 nothing to do with the old) from the following *plain*
 and *express* texts of scripture. “ Whatsoever Things
 “ (says St. Paul, Rom. xv. 4.) were written aforetime,
 “ were written for our learning, that we through pa-
 “ tience and comfort of the scriptures might have
 B 2 “ hope.”

“ hope.” And again, in his 1 Cor. x. 6. the Apostle having in the foregoing verse spoke of the overthrow in the wilderness, of Israel after the Flesh, he says, “ Now “ these things were our examples, to the intent we “ should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” And after reciting other wicked acts of the people of Israel, he adds these words in the 11th, “ Now all “ these things happened unto them for ensamples, and “ they are written for our admonition, upon whom “ the ends of the world are come.” And thus the same apostle speaks in 2 Tim. iii. 16 and 17. “ All “ scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for “ instruction in righteousness, that the man of God “ may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good “ works.” And that this fact will furnish us with matter for our *spiritual* improvement very suitable to this day’s solemnity, is very evident, inasmuch as it will *greatly* help, through God’s assisting grace, to arm us *against* ourselves—against that most *destructive* pride and deceitfulness of heart, which such late *extraordinary* successes now *crowned* with peace God has in his providence vouchsafed to these kingdoms, are too apt to occasion, by making men think themselves *very* righteous and good, when they are at the very *same* time far—*very* far from being so. For from hence—from the fact before us (as I have shewn above,) we *may* and *ought* to learn, that a nation’s success *against* or *even* its having peace granted it with its enemies, is no

—proof

proof of *itself* of its righteousness and goodness; because we here *plainly* see that the Israelites, who were (as the prophet calls them in the text) a *stiff-necked, rebellious* people, were made the conquerors of, and suffered to go in and possess the nations on the other side of Jordan, on account of the wickedness of their inhabitants, and to fulfil the Lord's promise. God forbid that I should pretend to determine, as Moses did, who was *sufficiently* warranted by the spirit of God so to do, with respect to the people of Israel after the flesh, what design God has in, or for what end he has granted to us such *extraordinary* advantages over our enemies, and suffered them *at least* to bring on us the blessing of peace. All I shall *venture* to say further in this matter shall be this, (to wit,) that there *seems* but *very* little reason for *us* to think that *these* successes, and the *restoration* of peace to this *our* land, have been granted us for *our* righteousness, because there seems *great* reason to think that *we* are a *stiff-necked, rebellious* people, as I *greatly* fear will *too* plainly appear upon enquiry. And such an enquiry it will be *highly* needful for me to make in order that we may *not* deceive ourselves; but see what we *really* and in *fact* are, and thereby become *truly* thankful for the mercies we have *already* received in common with our countrymen—the people of this land, and lay a *sure* and *firm* foundation for further blessings, both *national* and *personal*, both in time and eternity, by turning from all our evil ways, and giving up *ourselves wholly* to the will of God,

and the promoting of his glory, and the salvation of our own *precious* and *immortal* souls, and those of others, to the *uttermost* of our power.

I purpose *then* in the *remaining* part of this discourse, in *full* discharge of my office, and for the good both of *King* and *Country*, to shew you from facts, that we have very *little* reason to think that these our *late* successes and *present* peace are for our righteousness, because there is *very* great reason to fear *we* are a *stiff-necked, rebellious people*; and secondly, to stir you up, my brethren, to do all you can towards a *national* reformation, as it is the *only* way of being *truly* thankful to God for his *late* mercies vouchsafed unto us; and as it is the *surest* method we can take to *secure* to ourselves a continuance of these his mercies, and moreover and *above* all, as it is the *very* way through Christ to have peace *at the last*, and to be happy to *all* eternity.

First *then* I am to shew you from facts, that we have *very* little reason to think that our *late* successes and *present* peace are for our righteousness, because there is *very* great reason to fear *we* are a *stiff-necked, rebellious people*.

To begin then with *natural* religion: for is not this *grand* enemy to the truth, this *compound* of falsehoods, blended with some small *traditionary* remains of *revealed* truth, and *treacherously* improved by the greater light we now enjoy

enjoy by the help of the scriptures; is not this *natural* religion set up as an idol amongst us, before which many fall down and worship? For *this* by being made the *standard* of truth, has made many reject the truth *itself*, as it stands in the holy scriptures, the only *ordinary* means we have of knowing the truth. For says St. Paul (1 Cor. ii. 11.) “What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man, which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God”. And how does the spirit of God teach man the things of God? Does he not do it by the bible? And says our blessed Saviour, St. Matthew xi. 27. “No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he, to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” And is not the Bible the book—the *only* book, in which the Son has revealed his Father to man? It is from hence, and from the natural *destructive* pride of mens hearts together, that we have alas! so many Africans among us—so many persons, who deny the *coequality* and *coeternity* of the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the unity of the Godhead, or one Jehovah. For, because this doctrine of a trinity in unity does not tally with *this* their *made-up*, *imaginary* system of *natural* religion, which speaks only for one supreme God or divine person in the Godhead, they will not receive the scripture-account of it, which plainly declares for *three*. And it is from hence, and from the pride of mens hearts together, that we have so many self-justifiers amongst

amongst us, or so many, who *vainly* expect to be saved through their own *moral* good works, as they *deceitfully* call them; though as the apostle speaks, Eph. ii. 8 and 9. nay, indeed, as the whole scripture speaks, “ By “ grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of “ yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest “ any man should boast.” And to what else in general does the instruction of our youth tend, but to make them full of themselves—*puffed up* with heathen ignorance, set off a little with *some* truths taken from the scriptures, and averse to the *pride-destroying* and *humbling* doctrines of the *meek* and *lowly* Jesus? And what else have we *in general*, and what else can we *well* expect to have from persons *thus* educated in falsehoods, but falsehoods and untruths, unless God, *happily* for themselves and their hearers, turn their hearts, and convince them of their errors, to the acknowledgment of the truth—of the word of God, *wholly* and *absolutely* without any reserve at all—what else but falsehoods and untruths can we have from them, when they come to be instructors themselves, and from whose lips, which should preserve knowledge, the poison is spread abroad (alas!) among the people, the flock of Christ?

• Again; is not the Lord's Sabbath *most* miserably perverted and most *generally* broken amongst us? Does not the *rich* and *great* man (to his shame and amendment, for his soul's sake be it spoken!) *commonly* make *this* one of his *travelling* days, whenever he has occasion to take a journey?

a journey? Is it not made with many (I may say with most) a day of traffick—a day of buying and selling—a day of going to see their friends under an *empty, deceitful* pretence, that they cannot find time on another day to do it in? And is it not made, with many, a day of pleasure and diversion, and of doing whatever seemeth good in their *own* eyes? Are there not some, who *seldom* spend *any* part of it in the Lord's house? And are there not others, who, though they do come *there* pretty constant in *one* part of the day, are *equally*, yea, more constant in staying away the other, and in spending the *remaining* part of that holy day of the Lord in *set* and *formal* visits, to the quite needless employment of *too* complying *worldly-minded* servants, and in *common, trifling, worldly, unedifying* talk and conversation. And I would to God that *those*, who ought to be *ensamples* to the flock, did not *greatly* contribute towards the wickedness of the nation in *this* respect by their *general* and most *miserably negligent*, indecent, and in *many* cases *sabbath-breaking* way of serving their *respective* cures of souls, just *peeping* upon them on Sundays, and then *never* seeing them again any more *all* the week.

But further; is it not (look *around* the land and see) the *grand* aim of *most* to spend their time in *eagerly* pursuing the riches, honours and pleasures of *this* world? For do we not see that *most* are ready to do any thing *almost* for gain; are ready to *flatter* and run *any* lengths with the *rich* and *great* for the sake of *making* themselves

of them, and are ready to lye and cheat to such a very *monstrous* degree, that in dealing one with another, one can *scarce* find a man whose word one may with any *tolerable* safety at all rely upon, *especially* with respect to horses; for so *very* bold and shameless are men *in general* in this very *common* article of trade, that one would be inclined to think from their *practice* herein, that men had a *charter* or *dispensation* from *heaven* to lye, to deceive and cheat their neighbour, as much as ever they *possibly* could — the *more* the *better*? And what mean, *low*, *wicked* things do we see men of *all* orders, ranks and degrees amongst us, *most* shamefully stoop to for the sake of gaining honour, and of being set *on high* above the rest of their brethren, to *glitter* and *shine* like mushrooms of a day? And how crowded are *all* places of amusement and diversion? How *closely* and *generally* are *those* places attended, where *all* things are calculated for and addressed to the *sensual* man; where *all* the advantages of *language*, *voice*, *music*, *gesture* and *dress* are *most miserably* perverted to please men of a *corrupt* taste, and *such* as are under the influence of *headstrong*, *unsubdued* lusts and passions; and where *of course* men, who have a *real* and *tender* regard for their *own* souls, and the souls of others, would find *no* delight; but *on the contrary*, a great deal of *pain* and *uneasiness* from the *miserable* havoc the *grand* enemy of souls, the devil, must *of necessity* make there, to the *hurt* and *ruin* (alas!) of *very* many *precious* and *immortal* souls?

I might

I might, *indeed*, enumerate *sundry* other particulars, and set before you a long train of such like *melancholy* and *dismal* facts (so *very* prevalent are *all* kinds of wickedness amongst us, and so *very* little is there of the *true* spirit and life of the gospel in the people of *this* land) to prove what I am now upon : but as that would swell my discourse to too great a length, I must needs forbear. All *therefore*, I shall say *farther* on *this* head, is this, (to wit) that what has been *already* said, does too plainly prove that we have been *very* little, if *at all*, mended by the judgments, which the Lord has of *late* years been pleased to visit us with, in order to bring us to *repentance* and *newness of life* ; such as the distemper among the cattle, a want of corn, either *real* or (what is worse) *roguishly* pretended, and a war of about *six* years continuance, and but just now, as it were, brought to a conclusion. And *therefore*, all these things *duly* considered, we shall find that we have *very* little reason to think our *late* successes, and our *present* peace, are for *our* righteousness; and *great* reason to fear that we are a *stiff-necked, rebellious* people.

I proceed then now in the second place, to stir you up, my brethren, to do all you can towards a *national* reformation, as it is the *only* way of being *truly* thankful to God for his *late* mercies vouchsafed unto us in our *national* success and peace ; and as it is the *surest* method we can take to secure to ourselves a *continuance* of these his mercies, and moreover and *above all*, as it is the

very way, through Christ, to have that most *inestimable* jewel—peace at the last, and (O *most* glorious and comfortable truth!) to be happy to *all* eternity.

Let the scriptures then, my beloved in Christ, be our *only* guide. Let us believe all that is *therein* contained, and what can *fairly* be inferred from thence; however, what we may *there* find may differ from our *present* notions of things, and from the *principles* and *tenets* of men, even of *those* men who have the *greatest* reputation for wisdom and learning. For God's word is by *no* means to be given up for man's. Let us endeavour to get *all* the knowledge we can of God's word *ourselves*, and to *promote* the knowledge of it as *much* as ever we can amongst others. Let it be our *first* care to instruct *those* youths or children, which fall under any of our hands in the *sacred* writings — (the *original* Hebrew ones, if we can either by ourselves or others) and to keep their minds *uninfected* by the poison of heathen authors, and even of all such other authors, however esteemed in the world, which do not tally with the holy scriptures, and *some* way help to build them up in their most holy faith—in a belief of their own *natural* corruption, and of the *utter* impossibility of their being saved or coming to heaven, but through Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us see that our faith produces in us good works—that it be a faith that worketh by love, and sheweth itself in an obedience to all God's commands; and that we in all things walk *worthy* of our high

high calling in Christ Jesus, in all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Let us see that we *reverence* God's sanctuary, and keep holy his Sabbath-day, not doing (as the prophet Isaiah speaks, lviii 13.) our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words. Let us see that we set our affections on things above, and not on things of the earth; loving *nothing*, nor *any-body* any other ways, or in no *other* measure or degree, than the *word* of God allows of, (St. Matthew x. 37, 38 and 39.) that we seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness in *humble* trust and confidence, that God according to his promise (St. Matthew vi. 33.) will, in conjunction with our *honest* endeavours, provide us with all things necessary for us, be our state and circumstances *ever* so low and mean. For what *true* thankfulness can there *possibly* be to the Lord our God for his *late* mercies vouchsafed unto *us*, unless we turn from *all* our evil ways, and serve him with *all* our hearts? We may *talk* of thankfulness, we may in our prayers tell God that we are *so*: but God *cannot* be deceived. And our prayers in *this* case will *only* be an abomination unto the Lord. For we shall *then* only draw near to him with our lips, for our hearts will be *all* this while far from him. And it is *the heart* the Lord requires. "My son, (says he, by the inspired "Solomon, Prov. xxiii. and 26.) give me thine heart." And *true* thankfulness implies *some* return for favours received,

received, or *at least* an endeavour to please our benefactor—*him*, that does *kind* and *serviceable* things for us. And sin and wickedness we know can *never* please God. Indeed the *only* way the wicked has to please the Lord is to cease from evil and do good—to accept of his *gracious* pardon and forgiveness, through his beloved Son Christ Jesus our Lord, and to walk, as he in his blessed word has *commanded* them to walk.

And, as our endeavouring *all* we can by *first* mending ourselves, and *then* or *jointly* by furthering the amendment of others by precept, by example, and by a *proper* and *vigorous* exertion of *all* the authority we are invested with, either as parents, masters or magistrates; and *above all*, as shepherds of the flock of Christ, and the like—as such a labouring as *this* is the *truest* and *surest* mark of our being thankful to God for his *late* mercies, so is it the *surest* method we can *possibly* take, to *secure* to us a continuance of these his mercies. For, as we are assured by the *inspired* Solomon, (Prov. xiv. 34.) that “ Righteousness exalteth a nation, “ and that sin is a reproach to any people.” And as God thus speaks by his prophet (Jeremiah xviii. 7.) “ At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, “ and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull “ down, and to destroy it. If that nation, against “ whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I “ will repent of the evil, that I thought to do unto “ them;” as this is the case, what better can one do
for

for *this* purpose, *even* for the good and welfare of our king and country, than endeavour all we can to make men *better*, and to become righteous—to become the *true* and *sincere* servants of the blessed Jesus. What *better* grounds can one go upon than these *never-failing* words of the Almighty, to *secure* a continuance of these his mercies? All else, that man (*poor helpless* creature of himself) can do, cannot afford any thing like such *reasonable, well-grounded* hopes of a *long* and *lasting* peace. For what can *even* the *most* wise contrived, *best* established, and *most* exactly conducted peace, according to the terms it was made upon, avail towards a continuance of it, if the Lord be *not* on our side: but on the contrary, disposed in *his* rage and fury to bring on us *again* all the miseries and distresses of war—one of the instruments in *his* hands of scourging a *wicked, stiff-necked, rebellious* people? (Ezek. xiv. 21.) For what is there that the Lord can not do, whose power is *infinite*, and admits of *no* measure or bounds *whatever*? But yet there is a *stronger* motive still behind, to *stir* you up to labour *all* you can for a *national* reformation, and *that* is this—that it is the *very* way, through Christ, to have *peace* at the last, and to be happy to *all* eternity. For, though *this* our labour to amend the people of this land should fail of its success, yet, as our labour *herein* will be in the Lord, our labour will not be in vain, (1 Cor. xv. 58.) We shall have our reward: Our reward will be sure in the world to come; for Christ will at the *great* day of account—the *awful* day of judgment, will
reward

reward every man according to his work, (St. Matthew xvi. 27.) And this *well-grounded* assurance of departing *in peace*, whenever our *then* happy change shall come (and no matter *then* how soon *as to ourselves*, Philip. i. 23.) and of being happy to *all* eternity—this *full* and *clear* view through faith and love, of the recompence of the reward, will enable us, through the *assistance* and *comfort* of God's holy spirit, *wonderfully*, and to our *own* astonishment, to *bear up* (hard, *very* hard, as *they* may and do *at times* oppress us) under all the *various* and *sundry* trials, that we may, nay, must of *necessity* more or less, in *one* way or *other*, meet with in our christian warfare from the world, the flesh, and the devil, the christian's *most* sore and bitter enemies. And *this* will not *only* be a joy and comfort to us in times of success, or when our land is in peace, as it now is, (and God grant it may *long* continue *so* to be) but *even*, when it is in affliction, or when our enemies *triumph* over us; which God forbid that they *ever* should. For, says the apostle (1 Cor. x. 13.) “ God “ is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted “ above what ye are able; but will with the temptation “ also make a way to escape, that you may be able to “ bear it.”

14 JY 60

To conclude; “ Be ye doers of God's word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” “ *Cease* to do evil, *learn* to do well.” “ Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and of
Course

Course “not reap corruption,” not be cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. “Be not weary in well-doing,” for in due time ye shall reap, ye shall be admitted into the joy, the *unspeakable* joy of our Lord, if ye *faint* not. “Be thou faithful unto death (says Christ to the “angel of the church of Smyrna, and through him “to *us* all”, (Rev. ii. 10.) Be thou faithful, be the consequence what it will, *even* death itself, “And I “will give you a crown of life.”

Go *then*, my beloved, my *much* longed for and laboured after in Christ Jesus, and do *likewise*; and I wish you, from my *heart* I wish you, yea, I *assure* you of good luck in the name of the Lord. Amen and Amen.

F I N I S.

Count "not reap corruption," not be cast into
 outer darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing,
 and gnashing of teeth. "Be not weary in well-doing,"
 for in due time ye shall reap, ye shall be admitted in-
 to the joy, the unspeakable joy of our Lord. If ye faint
 not. "Be thou faithful unto death" (says Christ to the
 "angel of the church of Smyrna, and through him
 "to us all," (Rev. ii. 10.) Be thou faithful, be the
 consequence what it will, even death itself. "And I
 "will give you a crown of life."

Go then, my beloved, my well-remembered and
 honored sister in Christ Jesus, and do what I
 wish you, from my heart I wish you, dear sister, to
 of good luck in the name of the Father, Amen and

Amen.

